

PARCC Diagnostic Field testing experience – How did the game day unfold for a new expansion team in a new league?

As with any game day, there is a pre-season. In this case, school has begun, students continue day to day on their general instruction. In this school district and grade, the use of iPads within that instruction is common place. There are always injuries and other issues that come up in the preseason. The district felt that live practice would increase the probability of success on the real “game day”. This was the rationale behind volunteering for PARCC diagnostic field testing in February of 2015.

After doing an infrastructure trial, pre “game” technical set up and testing, review with all team members and explaining roles; it was time for all of them to do their best with what they had on game day. Redundancy was important since if players were on injured reserve or not present and accounted for, a replacement needs to be ready to go in the game. On game day they started at 6 am and called the end of the “game” due to exhaustion and onset of darkness at 3 PM. As with any successful team, there were lessons learned.

Here are some lessons learned and background:

The district volunteered and was accepted for the PARCC Diagnostic Field Test for Math Fluency Grade 6. They chose to test 59 students. In this group there were 13 with IEP and/or 504 plans. Some had extended time and others had Read Aloud with extended time. Planning happened for weeks ahead of game day. Technical set up and infrastructure trials happened in the weeks prior.

The team consisted of more than 15 individuals with roles from LEA Test Coordinator to special education proctors/content teachers and technical assistance. On the day of testing 2 technical support staff and one teacher were absent as well as 5 students. One room expected to be available was not.

The sessions were set and verified with the Pearson Tech on the morning of the test. The read aloud sessions were verified specifically for accuracy of set up. There were one Standard Session, and 6 others for the specific needs groupings that were done. The sessions were split up among rooms for Read Alouds and extended time to keep the distractions down.

Local technical support printed login tickets for the students and proctor tickets for the Read Aloud. Tickets were separated for the various rooms and assignments. One student was not in the system; upon working with Pearson Tech Support, it was determined that the student was not assigned to the district. Pearson support was asked for help to change the student over to the test session; but they were unable to help. WNYRIC technical support manually walked through moving the student over, registered them in the test, and assigned them to the test session. The student’s ticket was printed and added to the standard test group. Prior to the test start time, the district lead had every Test Administrator meet in his office and an overview of the Test session start and resuming a student was reviewed. Last minute details were covered.

When the time to start the test came, the standard session was already started on the 17th per Pearson Tech Support. We were able to get two sessions that were not Read Aloud started but the Read Aloud sessions gave a form error. Pearson Tech Support was contacted by utilizing

support options provided to us for issues while testing. The first level tech support did not seem to see the urgency and kept going through identification difficulties. After 20 minutes with the level one support and not getting to a manager we were given a level two support specialist who was also unable to help us. Therefore the read aloud sessions were not able to test and the students were sent back to class.

Runners began going from the central tech office to sessions where issues were arising.

- Casper Focus issues for the iPads.
- Very few minor technical issues; all of which were solved.

Post-game day lessons:

Positives:

- All the students that attended the Non-Read Aloud sessions were able to test
- Value for the experience was felt by the whole team
- More than 75% of students were tested
- Issues were dealt with very quickly by the team
- There were only five iPads with issues going into Casper Focus
- Everyone understood their role and accomplished it

Negatives:

- Planned on staff were absent, backups, better communication day ahead/morning of would need to happen
- Pearson Tech Support did not show urgency for a testing session issue
- Finding available testing rooms was a challenge for the team and needs to have back-ups planned in advance
- Students tried to start the test when directions were given to not start the test through the Test Administrator script; thus anticipating this or doing a better job at directions would need to happen

Lessons Learned:

- Need more runners for issues between testing areas (technical and test admin)
- Allow for iPad(s) in each room as spare(s).
- More time needs to be allotted to put the iPads in Casper Focus to deal with issues.
- As part of the test administration script; an explanation that tests do not have the same questions should be done to let students know cheating is futile.
- Allow all of the students to utilize the tools in the tests. It confused some students to hear about the tools and not have them available.
- Backup staff for the testing sessions needs to be planned for.
- Plan for back up testing session locations
- Plan as best you can for the unexpected
- Infrastructure trials and any other trials that can be done ahead were valuable